

Silicon Gulch Gazette

Peninsula Political Edition

Jim Warren, Editor & Political Irritant

Issue #44, October, 1992

In this issue – what local newspapers won't tell you

- A 31.9% raise (\$14,976), 5 weeks after 1988 elections
- A ~\$125,000 "retirement," 6 weeks after final-term re-election
- "Environmentalism" who opposed coastal protection initiative
- Ditto, who dodged key ocean-dumping vote while on BCDC
- Opponent of low-cost housing for single parents or families
- A pay-off of a political supporter at constituents' expense
- Opponent of affordable housing sought by rural communities
- Partisan political perversion of nonpartisan local offices
- Ample examples of nothin' but "politics-as-usual"

Blunt, undiplomatic, "mad as hell" – but no lies What IS this Rag (and this issue)?

For most of a decade, the *Silicon Gulch Gazette* addressed Silicon Valley and technology issues – a freebie (worth at least every penny its 130,000 readers paid for it – *heh!*).

It was irreverent, informal, candid and often opinionated. But we [the quaint, editorial "we"] opined openly – not hidden by pretense of neutrality like some establishment rags are doing. And folks often figured we "told it like it was."

Well folks, this is a "political issue", tellin' it like it is. We and most of our neighbors have directly observed and experienced the arrogance, abuse, political posturing, waste and exploitation illustrated by reports on pages 2-4. We dug up the files and give references; you can verify our gripes.

We were polite when we first contacted the county. We expecting responsive representation and fair government. Now, after far too much experience, we are furious, and let it show. We've been called "abrasive," "inflammatory" and – apparently the worst political crime – "not a team player." *But after all else failed, we're sayin' it straight – an' it ain't pretty. We don't want Eshoo's "representation," no more.*

[Note: Huening had no knowledge of nor say-so over this.]

From historical treatise (of 1950; not 1992)

"Despite the November 'revolution,' the conservatives still held the economic power. They owned the industries, the large estates and most of the country's capital. Their wealth could be used, and was, to subsidize political parties and a political press that would strive from now on to undermine the Republic. ...

"The inflation could have been halted by merely balancing the budget – a difficult but not impossible feat. Adequate taxation might have achieved this, but the new government did not dare to tax adequately. After all, the cost of the war – 164 billion marks – had been met not even in part by direct taxation, but 93 billions of it by war loans, 29 billions out of Treasury bills and the rest by increasing the issue of paper money. Instead of drastically raising taxes on those who could pay, the republican [*sic*] government actually reduced them in 1921. ...

"Such times were heaven-sent for Adolf Hitler."

[From William L. Shirer's, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, copyrighted in 1950 – concerning the climate in 1920s Germany.]

From personal knowledge, the better alternative

Tom Huening Has Actually Done Something

– by Jim Warren [neither a Demopublican nor Republicrat]

I have known the two leading candidates for the south Peninsula's 14th Congressional District since the early '80s – and know their records, in detail. I first met Anna Eshoo while a community leader in 1984 and met Tom Huening in 1985 when we were both community college Trustees.

Based on their records – rather than sex, Party or what they say they will do – I support Huening. His record:

1992, Circumventing Washington's power brokers: Huening organized the *bipartisan* Omaha Summit for new congressional candidates; to get organized *before* entering the Washington meat-grinder. Over 140 have already signed up.

1991, Better education: He led the county's Best Schools Initiative that proposed teacher-pay for performance, longer school years, performance standards, technology support, after-school child care, etc. (Eshoo refused to support it.)

1990, Independent redistricting: Huening co-authored, along with the League of Women Voters and other nonpartisan groups, the statewide Citizens Independent Redistricting Initiative which would have taken redistricting out of incumbents' control, out of the backrooms, and made it a nonpartisan public process run by the judiciary. Its criteria were used by the Supreme Court when Willie and Pete couldn't agree on how to re-gerrymander California.

1988, Transportation: Initiated the county's Transportation Master Plan, co-authored and led by Sup. Tom Nolan.

1986, BART to SFO: Co-authored and led the initiative to extend BART to the San Francisco International Airport.

1984, Workfare: Was San Mateo/Santa Clara coordinator of the Workfare Initiative, plans now implemented in GAIN.

Huening has done something; not just Party politics.

An impartial source (unlike this rag)

Project Vote Smart:

Unbiased Voter-Information Hotline

Listing Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, Barry Goldwater, George McGovern and William Proxmire among its many founders and honorary co-founders, the nonpartisan Project Vote Smart has a massive collection of facts on all current candidates seeking federal office. This includes voting records, biographies, contributors, stated positions, and performance evaluations by over 60 different organizations (labor, business, conservative, liberal, anti-choice, anti-life, etc.). This is a project of the Center for National Independence in Politics, 129 N. W. 4th St. #204, Corvallis OR 97330; voice/503-754-2746; fax/503-754-2747.

Two hundred volunteers and student researchers use this database to answer questions from anyone calling their toll-free number: **800-786-6885**.

A Few Reasons to Vote for ABA – “Anybody But Anna”

The past best predicts the future,

— or —

No matter what they *say*, what have they *done*?

Who's Eshoo likely to represent?

Eshoo's Loot (& Loyalty?): 15 Years of Big Bucks from Partisan Interests

1977: For what was and is usually a local, nonpartisan community college Trustee race, Eshoo *spent about 16 times more* than any other candidate ever spent – even a decade later. Much was from out-of-county or out-of-state “donors.”

1982: For what is legally a local, nonpartisan Supervisor's race, Eshoo raised \$102,396. Over a third – \$34,205 – came from out-of-county or out-of-state. Her closest rival, Woodside Mayor Joan Stiff – without such special-interest loot – raised and spent only \$60,358. [1982 FPPC Campaign Statements]

1985-1986: Long before Eshoo's re-election campaign – which everyone expected to be uncontested – she none-the-less earned over \$20,300 in donations. All but \$705 of it came from 90 larger [named] donors. A third gave addresses outside the county or state. 14% were real-estate-related donors – regulated within the county's jurisdiction by the Planning Commission, chaired by Eshoo's campaign Treasurer and fund-raiser. Over 24% was from lawyers – many representing clients before the Board she chaired or the Planning Commission her fund-raiser chaired. [from FPPC Statements]

Only months in office. Eshoo's first political payoff **Sold out Her District's Homeowners to Benefit Political Plumbers' Union**

In each of Eshoo's races for Supervisor, the plumbers' union has donated maximum time and money. [from FPPC Statements]

Only months after joining the Board of Supervisors, Eshoo provided the 3-to-2 swing-vote prohibiting homeowners from using plastic [“ABS”] sewer pipe after years of use. ABS is industry-standard, code-approved, low-cost, easy-to-install, easy-to-repair. Some cities even require it (e.g. in Foster City, to resist corrosion). Her prohibition applied only to homes in the apolitical, mostly-rural unincorporated areas – most being in Eshoo's district. Wealthy Atherton, her home, permits ABS pipe – as do all jurisdictions that adopt the Uniform Plumbing Code, including most Peninsula cities and towns.

“Technical judgement,” Eshoo-style

Eshoo's official rationale for prohibiting cheap, fast ABS sewer pipe? It might be a “fire hazard” (you can't keep it lit with a blowtorch!) or “health hazard” (homeowners rarely drink out of their sewer). At the time, the State Fire Marshal, county Environmental Management Director and county Chief Building Official all testified against her prohibition.

Eshoo's Career: Machine Politics

[Excerpted from campaign statements, newspaper articles and Who's Who listings; copies available.]

1942: Born in New Britain, CT.

1970s: Moved with lawyer-husband to SF Peninsula.

1975: Completed 2-year AA at Canada Junior College (Eshoo's highest degree); political training with Coro group.

1970s: Board member, Lawyers' Wives of S.M. County.

1977: Lost her race for community college district Trustee. *Spending about 16 times more than any other candidate had ever spent*, she still came in 3rd.

1978-1982: Chair, County Democratic Committee.

1979: Began a run for County Supervisor, then deferred to Arlen Gregorio – a more senior member of the Democratic Party – when he decided to seek the “nonpartisan” seat.

1980-1982: One of seven members of the “Ted Kennedy for President” State Steering Committee and a Democratic National Committee member from California.

1981-1982: An assistant to Leo McCarthy, Cal. Assembly.

[**1981:** For the first time, ever, the Democrat-controlled redistricting attached elite Atherton to the rural, coastside 3rd Supervisorial district – including Eshoo's two-story stone manor (by a few hundred feet). It had an open seat for 1982.]

1982: Stressing her “political contacts with state and federal officials,” Eshoo won the 3rd District Supervisor's seat. She *spent about twice as much* as her nearest opponent for 56% of the November vote. [* - Peninsula Times-Tribune, 6/7/82]

1986: As incumbent President of the Board and longtime Party worker, she easily won re-election against only token opposition by coastside community leader Jim Warren who said, “It'd be a civic obscenity to let her run unopposed, given her systematic, arrogant disregard and even exploitation of so many communities she's supposed to represent.”

1988, June: Entered congressional race late but used Party contacts and national money-connections to overrun peace activist and international leadership-exchange organizer Jim Garrison in the Democratic primary.

1988, Nov. 8: Lost her congressional race to Stanford professor Tom Campbell.

(**5 weeks later**) **1988, Dec. 13:** Led the Democratic majority on her county Board of Supervisors in *voting for a \$14,976 raise above their January salary* (forced to rescind it by the county's first-ever successful ordinance referendum).

1990, June 5: Re-elected without opposition to her third and final term as Supervisor (County Charter limits terms).

(**6 weeks later**) **1990, July 17:** Again led her Democratic majority – under a misleading Agenda item – in *voting themselves a ~\$125,000 “retirement” annuity* – instantly vesting, for 12 years on the Board. Huening voted “no.”

There's lots more – just ask.

Ignoring what Eshoo SAYS she has done, do YOU know of ANYTHING that she has accomplished – beyond Democratic Party work? We deserve better!

Atherton's Anna Eshoo Offers Only "Politics as Usual"

Politics as usual – Slurping at the tax trough #1 **'88 Elections Over; Eshoo Voted For a 32% (\$14,976) Salary Increase**

Five weeks to-the-day after Eshoo lost her congressional race and Sup. Tom Nolan lost his State Senate race, Eshoo led her Board's vote to give themselves a 31.9% increase bumping their Jan. 1, 1988, salary of \$46,951.06 up to \$61,927.20 as soon as possible (2/18/89). [County Personnel Dept. data]

Buried in holiday distractions: They voted on Dec. 13th and 20th. (Also on the 20th: They were less generous with almost-bankrupt East Palo Alto. They refused to vote to defer EPA's payments to the county for police dispatching services and for county building rents; wanted more details. [PTT, 1221])

Sup. Tom Huening – then-known to follow the "Go along to get along" principle (and counting the 4-to-1 Democratic majority) – co-authored the raise and voted for it.

Public outcry ignored: In spite of the holidays, Board meetings were packed with public opponents, plus county employee groups who had just been limited to 3- to 4-percent increases. When the Board refused to rescind their pay raise, Stanford computer consultant June Genis threatened a referendum – which would require collecting almost 20,000 signatures in about six weeks. The Supervisors ignored it, one saying, "Collecting that number of signatures takes a tremendous amount of effort." [San Francisco Chronicle, 1/12/92]

Referendum forces responsibility: For the first time in the county's history, a referendum was successful – and didn't use any paid solicitors. Genis' referendum drive needed 19,715 signatures. Within six weeks of starting, she turned in over 38,000. The pay-raise was rescinded.

Politics as usual – dessert from the tax trough **Perqs Most People Just Dream Of**

At the time Eshoo and the others voted themselves a \$61,927 salary – and a plan to increase it again, four months later – San Francisco Supervisors were getting \$23,924 and even wealthy Marin County only paid \$36,192. [PTT, 1221]

Palatial per diem; massive "mileage": The Supervisors also give themselves a transportation allowance – Eshoo reported getting \$5,200 in 1991. But for the same period, Eshoo listed \$5,326 in "per diem & mileage" from the Bay Area Air Management District. And \$1,086 from BCDC. And \$2,300 from the Health Plan of San Mateo, \$500 from LAFCO and \$400 from another [illegible] Board.

They each have tax-paid cellular phones; Eshoo's is the expensive, super-yuppie model. At last check, only Sup. Tom Nolan had ever submitted repayments for personal calls.

Palace remodel? Several county workers have alleged that Eshoo's office was massively remodeled at great county expense – perhaps exceeding \$30,000 – but any evidence is buried in the General Services paperwork warehouse. Anyone have any leads? The Public Records Act applies, if we just know where to look.

Politics as usual – Slurping at the tax trough #2 **Final-Term Election Over; She Voted For a ~\$125,000 "Retirement" Perq**

Six weeks after being re-elected to her final term as a County Supervisor, on Jul. 17, 1990, Eshoo led her Democratic majority in supporting items 37 and 38, buried in the Human Resources Director's part of the Consent Agenda regarding, "health and welfare benefits for former members of the Board of Supervisors" and "providing a deferred compensation plan for the Board."

Nobody in the press noticed the innocuous listings.

A week later, again buried on the Consent Agenda, items 34 and 35 got their required second vote – passing 4-to-1. Sup. Tom Huening opposing, without comment.

Caught: Huening's opposition prompted press attention, and it was splattered all over the next days' front pages.

Platinum-plated perqs: The "deferred compensation" was an annuity for each Supervisor, instantly-vesting upon their "retirement" – after 12 or fewer years – variously valued at \$100,000 to \$150,000 or more. The "health and welfare benefits" were full "premiums or other charges for the former member's health, dental and vision benefits (which includes spouse and dependents)" for up to 24 years – for Supervisors who served three full terms; 12 years.

An outraged public packed the next Board meetings, drafted a referendum and threatened a recall, forcing them to rescind their just-passed perqs – at least until after the '92 congressional races that 3 of the 5 were already planning.

"Neutral" review commission, Eshoo-style: As the outspoken advocate of the perqs, once it was obvious that they better withdraw them for the moment, Eshoo recommended a "neutral" study commission – and named five retired, high-paid former county officials. One was a former judge who was "double-dipping" – drawing both city and state pensions – who had unsuccessfully sued the county's retirement board seeking a third pension.

Gender equality, Eshoo-style: All Eshoo nominees were men. As soon as the public was permitted to speak, we urged that the commission include women and citizens who were not government retirees, a proposal strongly supported by Sup. Mary Griffin. They adopted it, but made sure that most of the commission remained retired county officials.

Voters will finally be consulted: Though these "retirement" gifts are somewhat different from salaries, at least county voters will finally be permitted to vote on the latter. Using the pressure of the Eshoo-Huening race for Congress, Huening was finally able to get Board agreement to put a measure on the November ballot that somewhat-limits how the Board could give itself salary hikes. Sup. Eshoo voted for it; opposing it would have been political suicide. Nolan was the only opponent. He lost his congressional race and looses his Board seat in 1993; voters can't hold him accountable.

Eshoo's Representation of Her District's Interests

Eshoo Opposed Affordable Housing; "Not a problem; don't fix it!"

Leaders from communities in Eshoo's District *urged* increasing the number of 2nd units – in-law apartments – permitted in the county's rural coastside areas, up to *one per 585 acres*. At the same time, already-crowded bayside suburban communities pleaded for fewer units. Eshoo, residing safely in Atherton, snapped, "When there's not a problem, don't fix it," and promptly voted to crowd more people in where fewer were wanted while limiting the county's 161,000 coastside acres to 131 units – about *one per 1,200 acres!* However, politically-active Ladera was given a requested reduction. [1985 Board Minutes and audiotapes, multiple hearings]

Boat-owners forced into Peninsula housing crunch: Appointed to the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), Eshoo voted to prohibit people from living on their boats in Peninsula boat harbors, even though some had lived there for decades. They must compete in – rather than relieve – the Peninsula housing crush. (Ain't no boats in Atherton.) [mid-'80s BCDC Minutes and boating periodicals, many hearings]

Eshoo Opposed Low-Cost Housing For Single Parents & Small Families

Communities representing *most* of Eshoo's district repeatedly pleaded for larger 2nd units – but only on large, rural parcels – units big enough for single parents and small families. Eshoo has often expressed concern for single parents and low-income families. Yet, she actively *opposed* allowing secluded rural 2nd units larger than 700 square feet.

The coastside has multi-generation farm families with their adult children working on the farm – who must either crowd into their parents farmhouse or live elsewhere and commute to their farm, unless it's larger than 320 acres. Housing for itinerant farm-workers is permitted, but not for family.

Once Re-Elected, Eshoo Backed a Competing Initiative, Against the Local Coastal Initiative

Eshoo vigorously states she's an environmentalist. But, upon election to her second term in June, 1986, Eshoo promptly joined her other Board members in placing a developer-backed initiative on the ballot that directly competed with the environmentalist-backed Local Coastal Initiative, placed there by gathering tens of thousands of signatures. The developers' initiative that Eshoo backed went down to massive defeat; the environmentalists' initiative passed. [numerous articles in 1986 newspapers]

When a controversial vote came before BCDC re offshore dumping of Oakland dredging, Eshoo let her alternate vote.

The County Budget? Eshoo Didn't Balance It

The one year (1986) that Eshoo presided over the Board, County Manager Dave Nichols had to fix a \$6,000,000 shortfall in a \$300 million budget – which the Board adopted. In fact, the law *requires* that the budget be balanced, and the County Manager is *always* the one who does the work.

1986 was the year Eshoo ran for re-election – a year in which her Board quickly gave their union employees/voters 5%-to-7% increases while Bay Area inflation was 3.77% and falling. That was the year that Nichols announced his desire to retire, saying he hoped to be replaced before having to go through another year's budget adoptions and negotiations.

[collective bargaining contracts, Labor Dept statistics, newspaper articles]

More Eshoo Examples – From the Record

1986: While chairing the Board of Sups, Eshoo received notice that the state planned a low-security detention center near La Honda – in the middle of her supervisorial district and the quarter of the county where her Board rarely funded more than one Sheriff's patrol. Weeks later, she'd still not notified area residents. Finally, the Sheriff told community leaders, who immediately organized a meeting with county and state officials. Asked what she would do to halt the plan, mitigate its threats or in any other way represent her district's concerned residents, Eshoo said, "There's nothing I can do."

1984: Eshoo opposed Prop. 36, that would require new government fees and fee increases be approved by 2/3rds of those voting – i.e., approved by about 1/3 of the registered voters in a usual ~50%-turnout election. [Pen. Times-Trib., 10/24/84]

(A recent proposal is that such increases require approval by only half of the registered voters – a tougher requirement.)

1982: She opposed Victim's Rights Initiative (Prop. 8).

1986: [Trivia Alert!] "First things first?" When her first turn came to chair the Board of Sups, she immediately asked for a law limiting the position's title to "President" or "Chairman." Three Sups opposed it, including Ms. Jackie Speier, who had chosen the title of "Chair" the previous year. They decided presiding officers could choose their title. [Pen. Times-Tribune, 1/86]

There's lots more, but we're out of time before this evening's candidate-forum in Palo Alto. Watch for a greatly-expanded issue; write and request a copy. (Ya could even help pay for it??)

When the Peninsula press won't tell the public of candidates' real track records, then [irritated] citizens have to do it. We hope you, also, will do the research and publish your findings. –JW